



**Indiana Career Council  
Core 40 Subcommittee**

**February 25, 2015  
Indiana Government Center South  
Conference Room A  
302 W. Washington St  
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Kris Emaus, James Little, Commissioner Teresa Lubbers, Amy Marsh, Amanda Culhan, Nicole Detrick, , John Newby, Superintendent Glenda Ritz, David Shane, Dan Tyree, Matthew Weinzapfel, Peggy Wild, PJ McGrew, Marie Macintosh, Jason Bearce, Todd Bess, Pam Horne

**Members Absent:** Rick Barnett, Martin Pagdett, Kathleen Randolph, Marcus Robinson, Carol Easterday, TJ Rivard, Heather Moffat, Chris Lowery

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Berry

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Superintendent Glenda Ritz and Commissioner Teresa Lubbers called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM and welcomed members.

**II. Review and Approval of December 2014 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Shane motioned to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Tyree seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**III. Review and Discussion of Recommendations and Next Steps**

Committee reviewed handout indicating current staff recommendations which led to a discussion around the general diploma. Commissioner Lubbers stated the importance of looking at the general diploma and if it is still a viable option for students. Currently, 10,000 students earn this diploma (15%). Ms. Wild described the current requirements for a general diploma. Essentially, removing this diploma as an option would mean students would take 6 additional credits (2 in math, 2 in science and 2 in social studies). Commissioner Lubbers added that a small number of students are not able to complete the Core 40, this led to the discussion of evidence-based waivers. Some students can earn an evidence-based waiver if they do not pass specific ECA material. Superintendent Ritz explained what an evidence-based waiver is and added that Indiana has made progress in decreasing the number of evidence-based waivers that are utilized for students earning a Core 40 diploma.

Commissioner Lubbers stated it wouldn't be unreasonable for all students to earn a Core 40 diploma if they had the flexibility of pathways, for instance, in mathematics. Mr. Bess indicated that one concern right now in doing this is capacity for schools in other subject areas that would be impacted, especially social studies and science. Science is particularly difficult due to the limited number of qualified teachers with licenses in science areas. Ms. Mackintosh explained that a phase-in process could be implemented to get in place resources and guidance from IDOE.

Mr. Weinzapfel indicated that as an employer, there is great opportunity for students with general diplomas and would like it to be more of a work-focused diploma built around instruction in financial literacy, work ethic and soft skills; a Core 40 only approach could alienate some students. Mr. Weinzapfel also cited the Indiana Chamber survey which showed academic values did not score high as high as other work-centric values. Mr. Shane reported that manufacturing jobs make up 50% of the new jobs in the economy; will need employees to run high tech machinery which requires students to have a higher skill set. The Core 40 could be built as foundation for all students.

Mr. Bess mentioned the implications achieving the Core 40 will mean for students—takes away 6 elective credits general diploma students currently have to explore and develop in a pathway. Mr. Tyree stated that if we keep the lid that low this doesn't help students; we need to raise the bar, and we can do it and we need to do it. Use CTE courses to teach academic requirements. Mr. Weinzapfel added that it is important to ensure this doesn't lead to a higher dropout rate.

Commissioner Lubbers noted that jobs will require more skills and more post-secondary education and credentials; therefore, it is important we set high expectations for students. Mr. Bess stated we need to look at the entire picture and the impact on schools and students. Pathways and options can be something the field could support.

Superintendent Ritz indicated that one diploma could meet the needs of all students; the history of the Core 40 focused on college for all; we can change that by adding in the flexibility to include all students and a broader range of course options and broader assessments that are not specific to courses. Any new Core 40 could allow students to achieve their goals; from special education needs to high ability. The committee needs to feel comfortable with what is in place without needing the general diploma. Commissioner Lubbers indicated the need for Science pathways; PJ McGrew stated that this work is already happening.

Ms. Emaus shared with members the need to be mindful of the economic impact this has within the state; companies look at availability of a highly skilled workforce and the ability to retain and attract new business to our state.

Ms. Horne reminded the group to look at under-represented students and how any new diploma may affect the 34% of students who are currently free and reduce lunch recipients.

#### **IV. Math Pathways Update**

Mr. Bess shared with the committee examples of 5 Math Pathway variations that could add flexibility to the Core 40 diploma and meet the needs of students. All pathways are structured to prepare students for the grade 10 assessment; student course taking after that could be dependent on previous performance in math as well as post-secondary college and career goals. Mr. Bess introduced the idea of a Quantitative Reasoning (QR) 'stand-alone' class, which was created to better prepare students to meet college level math expectations (non-STEM) and reduce the need for post-secondary remediation.

Ms. Horne indicated that the Quantitative Reasoning course is included in several pathway examples and felt that a stand-alone QR senior level course should have Algebra II as a pre-requisite.

The committee also reviewed a handout with the current courses that count towards quantitative reasoning credit which is applied toward the Core 40, Core 40 with Academic Honors, and Core 40 with Technical Honors diploma requirements. Ms. Wild indicated that this list, which includes quantitative reasoning courses in Agriculture, Business, Engineering (including PLTW and non-PLTW), Family and Consumer Sciences, IB, Science, Social Studies, and Trade/Industrial has been vetted with input from the field. Mr. Bearce and Mr. McGrew indicated they would like the opportunity further vet and revise if necessary. Ms. Marsh and Ms. Culhan both agreed that counselors will need guidance on how to place students in pathways; there could be unintended consequences in which students/parents choose pathways that may not be challenging enough and impact future post-secondary plans. Superintendent Ritz suggested this is where the new assessments could be utilized to inform math placement, so that this decision is data driven.

Much discussion revolved around the pathway examples and how they align with the post-secondary expectations. Ms. Horned cautioned that entrance into 4 year universities would require students to take the first two pathways; Mr. Bess responded that the last pathway is an opportunity for students to get the additional rigor (of 6 credits, instead of 4 as required in the general diploma) in math to be a college and career ready graduate.

Superintendent Ritz agreed that a 6 credit requirement for math is reasonable; it is what they have been doing, even if they were retaking a course due to failure.

Another option, as the committee looks at adding pathways, is to embed required math credits into existing CTE courses, such as Precision Machining. Mr. Bess offered that with collaboration from math educators and CTE instructors, courses could be structured around standards that apply math in the field. This application would be value-added to the CTE coursework and could also assist in students earning dual credit. Other states have also started this type of instructional practice. Ms. Emaus and Mr. Shane indicated there should be more flexibility, including regionally, in CTE courses to embed math coursework-such as Health Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing. Doing this would allow more students to take CTE courses and exposure to career clusters and pathways and to the jobs that are high wage-high demand. Ms. Wild reminded the group that currently, courses that count towards the quantitative reasoning credit do not count as math credits; students use their elective credits to meet this requirement.

**V. Next Steps**

At least 6 additional required credits would be added to leverage the rigor needed to eliminate the general diploma. This has economic and capacity impacts on schools. Need to look at the standards students need to achieve and how those standards tie into assessments and certifications. Commissioner Lubber stated that as we do this work, we must not hold people hostage in terms of their local economy; the state needs a core curriculum as well.

Superintendent Ritz stated that more work needs to be done on the diploma structure, and we would continue to focus our efforts in creating pathways for all students.

**VI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Lubbers and SPI Ritz adjourned the meeting at 2:47 PM.